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Japan's Haunting War Art: Contested War Memories and Art Museums

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-James Looney and Karen Kinslow, 2009

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ASATO IKEDA

JAPAN'S HAUNTING WAR ART: Contested War Memories and Art Museums

WAR ART

Janson's History of Art: the Western Tradition, one of the most popular introductory art history survey textbooks in North America, covers twentieth-century art in three chapters—"Toward Abstraction: The Modernist Revolution, 1904-1914," "Art between the Wars," and "Postwar to Postmodern, 1945-1980."¹ With remarkable gaps between 1914 and 1919, and again between the early 1930s and 1945, the book reproduces common discourses about war and art: art becomes irrelevant when people are at war. Contrary to this assumption, however, war has been the subject of art from ancient periods to the present day. The Second World War unquestionably generated a great quantity of art both during and after the war as a result of the unprecedented scale of official art production in many nations, including the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Russia, Australia, and Germany.² Japan was certainly no exception: artists produced propaganda war paintings, *sensō-ga* in Japanese,³ which mediated Japan's militarist ideology and provided justifications for what was called the Great East Asian War.⁴

The production of propaganda war paintings is a generally neglected field in art history, but even more overlooked is the *post-war* history of such paintings. What happened to *sensō-ga* after the

¹ H.W. Janson, *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*, 7th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2007).

² Laura Brandon, *Art & War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

³ In generic terms, *sensō-ga* can be translated as war paintings, but the use of the term differs among specialists. I employ *sensō-ga* defined as Japanese propaganda war paintings of the Second World War, distinguishing it from war art that would include paintings by art student soldiers and 'resistance' artists. For discussion of the term, see Hirase Reita, "Sensō to bijutsu korekushon: sokoni atte wa naranai mono" (War and Art Collection: Things That Ought Not Be There), *Kōza nihon bijutsu shi 6: bijutsu wo sasaeru mono* (Studies in the History of Japanese Art 6: What Makes Art Possible), ed. Kinoshita Naoyuki (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2005), 157.

⁴ The term, the "Great East Asian War," different from the Pacific War or the Second World War, indicates Japanese militarists' perspective on the war; that is, the war to fight against the West and liberate Asia.

war? Some of the paintings were purposefully destroyed or have since been lost, while others remained in artists' hands or acquired by private and state museums. Among the latter were a specific group of paintings that have become one of the most problematic collections of Japanese art: 153 *sensō-ga* confiscated by the United States in 1951 and repatriated to the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, on indefinite loan in 1970.⁵ The repatriation compelled the National Museum to confront and address difficult moral questions: Should the museum display the war paintings? If so, *how*?

The reason why the collection distresses the museum is embedded in its unique, entangled post-war history, but is not exclusive to it. *Sensō-ga*, fundamentally, is a form of war art. War art—whether anti-war art, pro-war art, or historical record paintings—expresses artists' and commissioners' political orientations, demands the political engagement of viewers, and requires careful, historical contextualization of the works' production. We must thus consider how the National Museum, as an art museum of a *defeated* country—where the Modernist belief in 'art for art sake' still prevails and the victor's occupation has influenced its subsequent history—should, or could, display the war paintings.⁶

The question of the display of *sensō-ga* furthermore directs our attention to the domestic disputes over Japan's war memories; it mirrors contemporary Japanese society's uneasiness in coming to

⁵ In 1970, 153 war paintings were returned from the United States. However, scholars like Masuko Yasushi have indicated the possibility that the United States confiscated more than 153 paintings. Masuko Yasushi argues that there is an unnatural lack of images of the Emperor and Empress in the repatriated collection. Where paintings that portray the Imperial family—such as Fujita Tsuguharu's *Ise no jingū ni goshojinpai* (The Emperor Visiting Ise Shrine) and Koiso Ryōhei's *Kōgō heika rikugun byōin gyōkei* (The Empress Visiting Military Hospital)—went is the subject of further research. In 2008, I confirmed the existence of three Japanese war paintings at the Navy Art Museum in Washington D.C., which suggests that there were paintings captured by the United States via a different route. Masuko Yasushi, "GHQ and 153 War Record Paintings," *Nihon University Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies Report* 7 (2006): 13-22.

⁶ For instance, museums that display official war art in Britain and Canada—the Imperial War Museum in London and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa—are historical museums. Japan's case may seem comparable to that of Germany, but a large number of confiscated Nazi paintings still remain in the United States, while those returned to Germany have only been exhibited in history museums. Gregory Maertz, "Invisible Museum: Unearthing the Lost Modernist Art of the Third Reich," *Modernism/Modernity* 15, (January, 2008): 80.

terms with the past and demonstrate how issues regarding the ways in which Japan should reflect on and represent its past remain highly debated and contested. On the one hand, conservative nationalists claim that the war was an inevitable, defensive war. On the other hand, leftist intellectuals argue that Japan should critically confront its *sensō sekinin*, or war responsibility. Accordingly, how the museum displays *sensō-ga* inevitably makes political statements, and the National Museum's role as a state-sponsored public institution makes its representation of the war a highly charged one.

As a contribution to what cultural critic Reesa Greenberg calls "After-War Studies," this essay not only introduces issues and problems with the production of war art, but also specifically examines its after-war history.⁷ Furthermore, considering exhibition spaces as dynamic and communicative sites of both social and political articulation, my study analyzes the display of war art, reconsiders the role of museums in society, and explores the possibilities for inquiry offered by museum exhibitions. In what follows, I will first define *sensō-ga* and trace the trajectory of the *sensō-ga* collection, considering its implication in post-war global as well as Japanese politics. My ultimate goal is then to analyze the display of *sensō-ga* at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and investigate how the Japanese State cultural, artistic, and educational institutions publically represent the war.

SENSŌ-GA

While *sensō-ga* is perhaps the most problematic of Japanese war art, it was certainly not the first war art produced in Japan.⁸ What

⁷ Reesa Greenberg (at my MA thesis defense, Carleton University, Ontario, April 23, 2008).

⁸ For more on the history of Japanese war art, see Tanaka Hisao, *Nihon no sensō-ga: sono keifu to tokushitsu* (Sensō-ga: Genealogy and Characteristics) (Tokyo: Perikan Publisher, 1985); Donald Keene, "Prints of the Sino-Japanese War," *Impressions of the Front: Woodcuts of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-5* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983); Kawata Akihisa and Tan'o Yasunori, *Imēji no nakano sensō: nisshin, nichiro sensō kara rēsen made* (War in Images: From the Sino-Japanese War to the Cold War) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1996). For the production of war art during the Second World War, see Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting during the Fifteen-Year War," *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 145-180; Mark H. Sandler, "A Painter of the 'Holy War': Fujita Tsuguji and the Japanese Military," *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia 1920-1960*, ed. Marlene J. Mayo and J. Thomas Rimer with H. Eleanor Kerkham (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001); Mayu Tsuruya, "Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga (War Campaign Documentary

distinguishes Japanese art of the Second World War from that of previous years, however, is the unprecedented, augmented scale of war art exhibitions sponsored by corporate companies, governmental institutions, and the military. The Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Government Information Bureau, the Education Ministry, and the Asahi Newspaper Company all organized and sponsored *sensō-ga* exhibitions under such titles as *Holy War Art Exhibition* and *Imperial War Art Exhibition* during the war.⁹ The *sensō-ga* exhibitions were held at museums as well as commercial sites of major department stores such as Mitsukoshi, Matsuzakaya, and Isetan.¹⁰ These exhibitions made war art accessible to a large number of people and functioned as national, mass entertainment.¹¹ On the other hand, the military imposed a remarkable degree of state control upon both artists and viewers. The military police (*kenpeitai*) carefully scrutinized art displayed at exhibitions and kept visitors under constant surveillance.¹²

Sensō-ga included commissioned, state-sanctioned, official paintings as well as unofficial, non-commissioned paintings. Wartime exhibitions often displayed officially commissioned war paintings along with war paintings produced by patriotic volunteer artists.¹³ To make the distinction, official war paintings commissioned by the Imperial Military government from 1937 to 1945 were known specifically as *sensō-sakusen kirokuga* (War Campaign Documentary Paintings) or *sensō-kirokuga* (War Documentary Paintings).¹⁴

Art Painting): Japan's National Imagery of the 'Holy War' 1937-1945," Ph.D. diss. (University of Pittsburgh, 2005); Maki Kaneko, "Art in the Service of the State: Artistic Production in Japan during the Asia-Pacific War," Ph.D. diss. (University of East Anglia, 2006).

⁹ The exhibitions also traveled outside Japan, including Japanese-occupied Manchuria, Korea and Taiwan, and *sensō-ga* was widely disseminated through its printing reproductions in booklets and postcards.

¹⁰ Department stores were important venues for exhibitions in Japan before (and after) the war.

¹¹ For example, 3,854,000 people visited the First Great East Asia War Art Exhibition of 1942. Tsuruya, 5.

¹² Kaneko, 52.

¹³ Tsuruya, 87-88.

¹⁴ Due to the deliberate destruction of official documents conducted by the Japanese government before the end of the war, there is an inevitable, conspicuous lack of basic research on *sensō-ga*. For instance, scholars have not agreed on the number of official war painters.

General Akiyama Kunio defined War Campaign Documentary Paintings in *Bijutsu* 1944 as follows:

War Campaign Documentary Paintings are paintings that have the significant historical purpose of recording and preserving military's war campaign forever. They are the paintings that would celebrate the Imperial army's spirit to defend the nation, defeat the enemy, and fight for victory. They are paintings that would preserve when, how, and why we fight for our posterity a hundred, thousand years later.¹⁵

The aim of War Campaign Documentary Paintings was to mobilize citizens emotionally and ideologically. To do so, *sensō-ga* encompassed various genres, including battle paintings, religious paintings of Shinto, history paintings, portraits of military leaders, paintings of colonized people and land, and paintings of citizens mobilized for the war.

The artistic style of *sensō-ga* also varies between Western-style (*yōga*) and Japanese-style (*nihon-ga*) painting, as well as among individual artists.¹⁶ Although Western-style painting was an imported product of the ultimate enemy, the West, oil painting techniques were employed in *sensō-ga* for their accuracy of rendering objects in naturalistic manners.¹⁷ Japanese artists and art critics' repeated references to art during Napoleon's reign, works by

¹⁵ Akiyama Kunio, "Hon'nendo kirokuga ni tsuite" (About This Year's Record Paintings), *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 2.

¹⁶ Japanese-style painting was defined in contrast to Western-style oil painting that was introduced to Japan in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁷ Oil painting was regarded as a new 'technology' or 'science' that was considered indispensable to the strength of the Japanese modern nation-state. For more on discussions of modernity and Japan, see Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995); Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). For reproduced images of the war paintings, see Hariu Ichirō and Sawaragi Noi, et al., *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945 / War in Wartime Japan 1937-1945* (Tokyo: kokusho kankōkai, 2007); Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting during the Fifteen-Year War," *Monumenta Nipponica* 52 no. 2 (Summer 1997): 145-180. For the reproduction of a Western-style war painting, Fujita Tsuguharu's *Compatriots on Saipan Island* (1945) see <http://www.ippusai.com/hp_home/sunset/fujita/saipan00.JPG> (accessed November 10, 2008).

Jacques-Louis David and Eugène Delacroix in particular, indicate that they aimed to produce works that would be comparable to "masterpieces" of Western history paintings.¹⁸ While, in principle, artists modeled their art on European neo-classical history paintings, the stylistic characteristics of Western-style war paintings were remarkably diverse.¹⁹ The differences in artistic training and the range of styles employed by artists demonstrate that the state succeeded in mobilizing different kinds of artists for one goal: to create art for the nation.²⁰

Mobilization through art was also achieved by Japanese-style (*nihon-ga*) painters, though through markedly different means. In contrast to Western-style oil painting, Japanese-style painting (ink or colour on paper or silk) has serious technical limitations that prevent artists from achieving the naturalistic rendering of objects. Therefore, Japanese-style painters typically painted seemingly unmilitaristic works, such as landscape paintings.²¹ Nevertheless, *nihon-ga* war paintings could support the military for two distinct reasons. First, the impressionistic quality of the Japanese-style paintings allowed for the creation of paintings that embodied a nationalistic 'divine spirit' with symbolic, idealized, and 'distinctively Japanese' iconographies. Second, the absence of figurative battle scenes in Japanese-style *sensō-ga* made the paintings more appealing

¹⁸ Yamanouchi Ichirō, "Sakusen kirokuga no ari kata" (How War Paintings Should Be), *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 2-5.

¹⁹ Tsuruya, 137. This diversity of style does not come as a surprise, given that the war painters had different artistic backgrounds. For instance, Fujita Tsuguharu was a member of École de Paris in France, Inokuma Genichirō studied under Henri Matisse, Shimizu Toshi studied at the Art Students League of New York, and Matsumoto Shunsuke was a self-taught artist who never left Japan. Still, many of them were European-trained 'avant-garde' artists.

²⁰ Although the military succeeded in mobilizing artists in various fields, it is nevertheless important to remember that not all painters painted *sensō-ga*, nor did all painters support the war. In some cases, painters were sent to the front to fight as soldiers without being given an opportunity to engage in artistic activities. In other cases, painters directly resisted *sensō-ga* and refused to paint propaganda paintings until their lives were threatened. See, Kuboshima Sēichirō, *Mugonkan Nōto* (The Silence Museum Notebook) (Tokyo: Shūei sha, 2005); Kozawa Setsuko, *Avan gardo no sensō taiken* (War Experiences of Avant-Garde) (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2004).

²¹ Accordingly, over sixty years after the war, it is now difficult to identify Japanese-style *sensō-ga* as propaganda war paintings until one considers the intention behind their production, as well as the history of their exhibitions.

to traditional art patrons. Japanese-style *sensō-ga* were sold to raise funds for military resources through their sales.²²

THE FATE OF THE *SENSŌ-GA* COLLECTION IN THE POSTWAR ERA

After America's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively, Japan's defeat came on August 15, 1945, upon its agreement to the Allied nations' demand of unconditional surrender. As the Allied forces landed in Japan and the Occupation began, over a hundred war paintings from the thousands of *sensō-ga* were assembled both from inside of and outside Japan. This was initially started as a result of personal exchanges between American military artist Barce Miller of the Office of the Chief Engineers (OCE) and Japanese leading war artist Fujita Tsuguharu.²³ Around the same time, the War Department of the United States ordered the collecting

²² This method of contributing to the war was called *kennō hōkō* (dedication service) and raising funds for battle planes was specifically referred to as *ginyoku kenkin* (plane wing donation). Japanese-style painters' contribution preceded Western-style painters' cooperation with the military. Western-style painters dedicated their artworks, rather than funds, to the military and military hospitals after displaying their works in exhibitions. "Yōga ka mo kennō hōkō" (Western-style Painters Do the Dedication Service Too), *Asahi Newspaper*, January 23, 1942; "Nihon bijutsuin dōjin no ginyoku kenkin" (Japanese-style Painters' Plane Wing Donation), *Asahi Newspaper*, February 20, 1942.

²³ Two different sections, OCE (Office of the Chief Engineers) and CIE (the Civil Information and Education) of the Occupational government were responsible for the collection of the Japanese war paintings. Kawata Akihisa indicates that OCE started collecting without CIE knowing, but as he suggests, official reports from OCE and CIE often do not match and leave details of the collecting process ambiguous. For detailed explanation of the confiscation, see Kawata Akihisa, "Sorera wo dō sureba iinoka" (What Do We Do with Them?), *Kindai gasetsu* 8 (1999): 1-41; Hirase Reita, "Sensō-ga to america" (*Sensō-ga* and the United States), *Himeji shiritsu bijutsukan kenkyū kiyō* 3 (1999): 1-45.

Fujita and Miller knew each other since they both studied in Paris before the war. Fujita also had a reunion with Australian artist Albert Tucker, who visited Japan with the Australian Army in 1947. Tucker made friends with other official war artists Santa Yasushi and Inokuma Genichirō. Santa's war drawings and watercolors owned by Tucker were donated and now housed at the Australian War Memorial. Gavin Fry, "Works by Albert Tucker and Yasushi Santa," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 3 (October 1983): 52.

The official GHQ documents indicate that Washington was also interested in collecting Chinese war art and exhibiting it in the United States. AG (C) 00090, January 16, 1946; "Japanese War Propaganda Paintings," February 21, 1946, CIE (A) 08145; "Japanese War Art," February 26, 1946 CIE (C) 06719. AG (C) 00090, November 7, 1945. (These are all GHQ official document reproduced microfilms stored at National Diet Library in Tokyo).

of war art so that it could be displayed in an exhibition planned under the title "Conquest of Japan" at both the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the National Military Museum in Washington D.C. Fujita Tsuguharu actively, and proudly, helped the Americans to collect the *sensō-ga*. In an interview printed in Asahi newspaper in December 1945, Fujita commented on the ongoing project, naively celebrating the proposed exhibitions and anticipating the future return of the paintings:

This is good news for us...I am glad that the paintings, in which we made serious effort to maintain artistic qualities, would be appreciated on the world stage...Americans are saying that they will return the paintings after thirty or fifty years when militarism is rooted out. I cannot help but express my gratitude to them, who have a profound understanding of art.²⁴

Curiously, it was not until February 1946 that General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Nations (SCAP), and its branch, the Civil Information and Education (CIE), were officially notified about the collection.²⁵ Upon learning about the already assembled paintings, MacArthur was confounded as to what to do with them. In a report written in February 1946, CIE summarized the process of assembling *sensō-ga*:

...Miller suggested to Fujita that these paintings should be collected by the American army to be shown in the United States. His actual intention was to secure the paintings as examples of Japanese propaganda for the information of the war department....Only recently the activity of collecting these paintings was brought to the attention of the SCAP. Headquarters then instructed the Engineers not to send any of the paintings to the United States at this time, but to continue collecting them....Subject paintings involve, among others, the following questions:

a. What is to be done with them?

²⁴ "Rengōgun no kimoiri de beikoku e wataru sensō-ga: sūnengo niwa futatabi kokoku e" (War Paintings That Travel to the United States with Arrangement by the Allied Nations: They Will Be Back to the Native Country after Decades), *Asahi Newspaper*, December 6, 1945.

²⁵ In Japan, the Occupation government is referred to as GHQ (General Headquarters) while it is referred to as SCAP (Supreme Commander of the Allied Power) outside Japan.

- b. Are they objects of historical, cultural or art value and so subject to protection by this headquarters?
- c. Should the paintings be suppressed as inflammatory propaganda pictures?
- d. If it is decided that they would be of interest to the War Dept. as examples of Japanese propaganda or for the purpose of a war museum, practical considerations indicate that only a selection should be sent. Who is to make the selection?
- e. If they are to be destroyed, should some be saved as valid works of art?²⁶

'What to do with *sensō-ga*?' was a conundrum for the SCAP, and the answer was contingent upon yet another difficult question: that of how to define *sensō-ga*. As we can see by this excerpt of an official report concerning the *sensō-ga* collection, it is difficult to speculate as to what the Americans intended to do with the war art because, at the time, they themselves did not even know. The Americans could have exhibited *sensō-ga* in Washington D.C. as examples of fascist culture, celebrating the "conquest of Japan" by exhibiting *sensō-ga* as the art of the recently defeated enemy, or they might have simply destroyed them as unworthy for consideration as works of art. At the same time, it should be noted that when they landed in Japan, the Americans did not only seek out wartime art, but were interested in collecting Japanese art in general. The end of the Second World War brought about significant changes in the accessibility of Japanese art, the influx of which was previously limited by the Japanese state.²⁷ Furthermore, collecting art was the foremost activity of the United States, which rapidly established itself as an heir to Western civilization and a powerful democratizing force in the context of the Cold War. That, in immediate post-war Germany, the Americans shipped contemporary German art and European masterpieces from the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, along with Nazi propaganda paintings, to Washington D.C. is indicative of the United States' interest in collecting and confiscating the art of other nations.²⁸

²⁶ "Japanese War Propaganda Paintings," February 21, 1946, CIE (A) 08145.

²⁷ Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, "Japanese Art History 2001: The State and Stakes of Research," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (May 2001): 116.

²⁸ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Lynn H. Nicholas, "Mixed Motives," *The Rape of Europa* (London: Vintage Books, 1995).

Because SCAP required professional assessment of the assembled *sensō-ga*, the paintings were displayed at Ueno Museum in Tokyo from August 21 to September 2 in 1946.²⁹ At the exhibition, a curator and member of CIE, Sherman Lee, dismissed their artistic value and stated that the paintings "would soon pass into oblivion among Japanese artists."³⁰ Despite this exhibition, General MacArthur never made a decision, leaving *sensō-ga* in the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.³¹ It was not until 1950 that the United States finally made a decision and confiscated the collection without consulting other Allied nations. The concluding American statement in regards to the *sensō-ga* collection in 1951 was as follows:

In reference to justification for seizure, subject paintings may be considered war booty. They have only a propaganda value and do not qualify for consideration as works of art. Their disposition may therefore be determined without reference to provisions in post-surrender policy documents, in the Rules of Land Warfare, and in international law which requires the protection, preservation, and restitution of cultural property in areas under military occupation.³²

The American art looting in Germany met severe criticism and was accused of being a legally questionable operation. Art historian Hirase suggests that MacArthur's caution about the Japanese war paintings stemmed from this recent American experience. For more on confiscation of German art, see Gregory Maertz, "The German War Art Collection," *Kunst und Propaganda: im Streit der Nationen 1930-1945* (Art and Propaganda: Clash of the Nations 1930-1945), exh. cat. (Berlin: The German Historical Museum Berlin, 2007).

²⁹ "Acquisition of Five Rooms in the Ueno Museum," SCAPIN-A, June 1, 1946.

³⁰ "Beijin no me ni utsutta sensō-ga" (War Painting Seen by Americans), *Asahi Newspaper*, September 16, 1946.

³¹ While MacArthur was troubled by the assembled *sensō-ga*, Australia, Holland, and Britain requested to borrow some of the paintings, but the United States declined the requests on the ground that they had not decided how to handle *sensō-ga*. CIE (C) 00016. Dec 30, 1946.

It is instructive that it was Japanese artist Ihara Usaburō, the former war painter who wanted to forget his wartime activity and "reset the game," who requested General MacArthur to remove the abandoned *sensō-ga* (which included his own paintings) from Ueno Museum as Chairman of *Nihon Bijutsuka Renmei* (Japan Artists Association) in 1950. CIE (C) 06720.

³² Quoted in Tsuruya, 21. Chief of the CIE, Lieutenant Colonel D. R. Nugent to the Chief of Staff, "Disposition of Japanese War Art," May 28 1951, GHQ/SCAP Record Group 331, National Archives at College Park, MD. As for both confiscated German and Japanese paintings, the American museums maintain the line that confiscating the war paintings would not violate the 1907 Hague Convention and the 1970 UNESCO treaty on cultural property because they are without cultural and artistic value. Accordingly,

Accordingly, the war paintings went from being labeled as art worthy of being exhibited in the United States to propaganda paintings without artistic value that nevertheless could not be destroyed. *Sensō-ga* was thus removed from Japan in fear of a rise of neo-militarism, yet the government of the United States was careful enough not to destroy them, in order to establish a constructive relationship with Japan, a Cold War ally. After all, this American sensitivity toward Japanese public opinion was what led them to absolve the Emperor of all responsibility for the war.

For nearly twenty years after the confiscation, as Sherman Lee predicted, *sensō-ga* indeed passed into oblivion, ignored by the Japanese until 1967, when photographer Nakagawa Ichirō rediscovered the confiscated collection at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. Subsequently, the Seibu Department Store in Tokyo organized an exhibition of color photographs of *sensō-ga* that Nakagawa took in Ohio. Following the exhibition, the media began to take notice of the collection, which consequently spurred a *sensō-ga* repatriation movement in the late 1960s. High-ranking politicians, including former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, current Governor of Tokyo Ishihara Shintarō, former war artists, the Asahi Newspaper Company, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and ultimately the Japanese government officially requested that the United States government return the *sensō-ga* collection.³³ Notably, this movement took on a nationalistic character, describing the paintings as "masterpieces" and "valuable ethnic monuments."³⁴ Furthermore, former war painters and wartime art critics like Miyamoto Saburō, Ihara Usaburō, and Yanagi Ryō reiterated the significance of *sensō-ga*, repeating their wartime arguments;

other Allied nations were not consulted regarding the disposition of the 'non-cultural property.' Maertz, "The Invisible Museum," 78.

³³ Asahi Newspaper Company zealously supported *sensō-ga* exhibitions during the war. Nagashima Keiya, "Sensō Bijutsu Kenkyū Shoushi" (History of Research on War Art), *Shōwa no Bijutsu*, exh. cat. (the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, 2005), 150; "Ōshū no sensō-ga wo chikaku henkan ka" (Do They Return Confiscated War Paintings Soon?), *Asahi Newspaper*, October 21, 1967.

³⁴ "Meiga" (masterpieces) and "kichōna minzokuteki kinenbutsu" (valuable ethnic monuments). "Ushinawareta sensō kaiga: nijyūnenkan beikokuni kakusarete ita taiheiyo sensō meiga no zenyō" (Lost War Paintings: The Whole Story of the Pacific War Art Masterpieces That Were Hidden in the United States For Twenty Years), *Shūkan Yomiuri*, August 18, 1967.

Miyamoto suggested that *sensō-ga* was the Japanese counterpart of the art of the Napoleonic Wars, and stated, "We want to avoid miserable wars, but I think fighting for one's own nation is still an honorable task."³⁵

Under pressure from Japanese nationalists, in 1970, the American government returned the 153 *sensō-ga* to the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo on indefinite loan. The repatriation of the paintings symbolized the ever-closer relationship between the United States and Japan during the Cold War; yet, the peculiar label of "on indefinite loan" pointed to the unequal power relationship between the two nations in the postwar period. Now, it was the National Museum that faced the question that tormented SCAP several decades ago: what to do with them? The question was even more complex this time: what to do with the paintings that were confiscated as propaganda without artistic value and returned to a Japanese art museum, conceived as "masterpieces" by nationalists? Furthermore, and more importantly, how could the museum display *sensō-ga* in a postwar Japan where no consensus has been reached between the right and the left, or between Japan and its former colonies, about how to understand and explain the war? Should they display *sensō-ga* at all?

JAPAN'S CONTESTED WAR MEMORIES

In order to understand the challenge that the museum is currently facing, we should explore what historian Phillip Seaton refers to as "Japan's contested war memories."³⁶ After the war ended, individuals from all along the political spectrum found their own ways of understanding the past in present terms. For some intellectuals, it was necessary to question wartime wrongdoings in order to lay out a new socio-political and ethical foundation for postwar Japan, the discourse of which I define as discussions of *sensō sekinin*, or war responsibility. Distinguished from war criminality as defined by the Americans at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo (1946-48), war responsibility focused on the investigation of Japan's responsibility for the war by the Japanese

³⁵ Ibid, 23-25.

³⁶ Phillip A. Seaton, *Japan's Contested War Memories: The 'Memory Rifts' of Historical Consciousness of the World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

people themselves.³⁷ In 1956, Ōkuma Nobuyuki, a member of the literary group Kindai Bungaku (Modern Literature), argued, "I do not want to conceal the memory of having been excited and confident about General Tōjō Hideki when the war started. We should bring that feeling back to the present and take responsibility for what we felt."³⁸ Likewise, filmmaker Itami Mansaku described himself as a "potential war criminal" and interrogated his own responsibility, even though he did not produce wartime propaganda. Denouncing the "deception theory" that Japanese citizens were deceived and misled by a handful of militarists, Itami proclaimed, "If you are so naïve as to believe that you are exempt from responsibility upon claiming that you were deceived, and that thus you now belong to the right causes, you must wash your face."³⁹ War responsibility was thus quintessentially about self critique, as well as about acknowledging the fact that Japan had victimized others.⁴⁰ The importance of contemplating Japan's role as a victimizer is best articulated by Oda Makoto, a writer and political activist who severely critiqued Japan's postwar self-representation as a victim of the war. Describing the mentality of Japanese people as a "victim complex," Oda Makoto wrote in 1968 that Japanese postwar reflection on the war had been a failure:

Our sense of victimization was too pervasive and too seductive. We took refuge in our feelings of victimization to avoid the perils of true autonomy...this complex precluded a parallel awareness of our

³⁷ While most of them agree that discussions of war responsibility should emerge from within Japan, the intellectuals developed different scenarios of who was responsible for what and for whom. For different arguments intellectuals made, see, for example, Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan 1945-2005* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006); John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1999).

³⁸ Ōkuma Nobuyuki, *Kokka aku: sensō sekinin wa dareno monoka* (The State Evil: Whose War Responsibility Is It?) (Tokyo: Chuō kōron sha, 1957), 198-215.

³⁹ Here, "washing a face" means to wake oneself up. Quoted in Kyoko Hirano, "Japanese Filmmakers and Responsibility for War: The Case of Itami Mansaku," *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia 1920-1960*, ed. Marlene J. Mayo and J. Thomas Rimer with H. Eleanor Kerkham (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 222.

⁴⁰ For discourses of grappling with war responsibility in artistic practices, see Tiampo's reading of Gutai art, particularly Shiraga Kazuo's *Fighting with Mud*. Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (University of Chicago, forthcoming); "Create What Has Never Been Done Before!: Historicising Gutai Discourses of Originality," *Third Text* 21, no. 6 (November 2007): 689-706.

own complicity as victimizers...we were entirely unable to realize that we ourselves may have been guilty of victimizing others...Why have we no records of wartime experience as victimizer?...Just as it is impossible to conceive of peace without confronting the reality of war, so it is impossible to speak of the experience as victim (*higai sha*) without including the experience as victimizer (*kagai sha*).⁴¹

For Oda, without overcoming the "victim complex," Japan would not be a truly democratic nation and Japan's post-Hiroshima call for world peace would remain a form of nationalist pacifism.

Disputes over war responsibility also took place in art communities in October 1945, initiated by the newspaper article "Integrity of Artists," by Miyata Shigeo. Miyata repudiated former war painters, including Fujita Tsuguharu, Inokuma Gen'ichirō, and Tsuruta Gorō, who helped the Americans to assemble war paintings. Miyata reproached them as "shameful prostitutes" who "disgraced" other artists.⁴² He also proclaimed that the war painters who benefited during the war should refrain from artistic activities, at least temporarily. Several days later, Fujita Tsuguharu and Tsuruta Gorō expressed their resentment against Miyata in the same newspaper. Fujita indicated that artists were always pacifists in their nature and thus could not have been militarists, asserting that all artists "needed to face the defeat," "contemplated the reason for the defeat," and "should make effort to contribute to world peace."⁴³ Tsuruta likewise refuted the idea that war artists were militarists:

War painters are not necessarily militarists...It is up to the viewer to see if the painting is militarist or not...[Miyata wrote that] artists supported the war, but until August 15th, almost all the citizens cooperated with the military and they should have...we, artists, paint anything we want. We are not philosophers.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Oda Makoto, "The Ethics of Peace," *Authority and the Individual in Japan: Citizen Pretext in Historical Perspective*, ed. J. Victor Koschmann (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1978), 157-160.

⁴² Miyata Shigeo, "Bijutsu ka no sessō" (Integrity of Artists), *Asahi Newspaper*, October 14, 1945.

⁴³ Fujita Tsuguharu, "Gaka no ryō shin" (Conscience of Artists), *Asahi Newspaper*, October 25, 1945.

⁴⁴ Tsuruta Gorō, "Gaka no tachiba" (Artist's Role), *Asahi Newspaper*, October 25, 1945.

A comment made by another former war artist, Ihara Uzaburō, three months after the defeat epitomizes most of the former war painters' attitude toward *sensō-ga* in the immediate postwar era: "I would like to forget about *sensō-ga* as quickly as possible and reset the game."⁴⁵ Although several artists were expelled from art communities, the war responsibility dispute never came to a conclusion.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the dispute ended when Fujita Tsuguharu permanently left Japan for France in 1951.

The post-war leftist demand for Japan's self-critique was marginalized as the Cold War paradigm took shape. SCAP decided not to interrogate the war responsibility of the Emperor. As historian John Dower questions, "If the man [the Emperor] in whose name imperial Japan had conducted foreign and military policy for twenty years was not held accountable for the intention or conduct of the war, why should anyone expect ordinary people to dwell on such matters, or to think seriously about their own personal responsibility?"⁴⁷ The continued existence of the Emperor as a 'symbol of Japan' clearly hindered the leftists' attempts from making war responsibility a central agenda of postwar Japan. Furthermore, in the early 1950s, SCAP embarked upon a so-called 'reverse course' by restoring wartime Japanese conservative politicians in fear of the growing Communist Party, which crucially influenced the course of future Japanese politics.⁴⁸ The ramifications of all this are still considerable in twenty-first century Japan; nationalist politicians in the government still continue to justify the past war as defense against Western Imperialism and an attempt to liberate the people of Asia, negate Japan's war responsibility and the existence of Japan-caused atrocities, and argue that the Japanese were innocent victims of the war. As is recently argued by historians like Orr, Seaton, and Saaler, however, this nationalist view of the war is not shared by every Japanese person; rather, this view is held by a specific group of conservatives who occupy high status positions in the Japanese

⁴⁵ Ihara Uzaburō, *Mizue*, November 1945, 27-8.

⁴⁶ Fujita was expelled from Shin-Bijtsukai (New Art Community) with other painters such as Yokoyama Taikan and Tsuruta Gorō.

⁴⁷ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 28.

⁴⁸ Upon restoration of the wartime politicians, scheduled war crime trials were suspended, which virtually ended Allied nations' interrogation of Japan's war criminality. Jeffrey Kingston, *Japan in Transformation 1952-2000* (London: Pearson Education, 2001), 13.

government or Japan's social hierarchy.⁴⁹ For instance, Ishihara Shintarō, the current Governor of Tokyo, is famous for calling the Nanking Massacre a "lie" fabricated by the Chinese; in 2007, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō publicly denied that Asian women had been coerced into sexual engagements, even though the government once issued apology for the exploitation in the early 1990s.⁵⁰ Such statements continually lead to domestic as well as international criticisms.

The ideological friction between Japan and its formerly colonized nations (and between the Japanese left and right) has been most apparent in the sphere of Japanese education, and especially in struggles over history textbooks, upon which the Japanese government imposes state censorship. The history textbook problem (*rekishi kyōkasho mondai*) has spurred heated debates since 1982, when both Korea and China expressed anger toward the government's effort to change the word for Japan's actions from "aggression" (*shinryaku*) to "advance" (*shinshutsu*).⁵¹ The history textbook problem is not only confined to issues of Japan's foreign diplomacy; civilians in Okinawa, the islands in Southern Japan, have claimed that they or their ancestors were forced to choose suicide over humiliating defeat; they have since requested that the government rewrite the textbooks accordingly.⁵² Meanwhile, since the 1990s, the government has approved a history textbook written by an ultranationalist group, the Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks, whose manifesto calls for rejecting the "masochistic view of history" and bringing a "bright" perspective to national history.⁵³

⁴⁹ James Joseph Orr, *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001); Sven Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion: The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society* (München: Iudicium, 2005).

⁵⁰ Kingston, 148; Tabuchi Hiroko, "Prime Minister Denies Women Were Forced into WWII Brothels," *Japan Times*, March 2, 2007.

⁵¹ Saaler, 20.

⁵² "Okinawa Slams History Text Rewrite: Assembly Tells State to Retract Order to Downplay Mass Suicides," *Japan Times*, June 23, 2007.

⁵³ Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho wo tsukurukai to iu undō ga aru* (There Is a Movement Called "The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks"), ed. Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho wo tsukurukai (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 1998), 8-9.

In postwar Japan, the discourse of war responsibility has failed to be incorporated into government policies, artists' war responsibility has been left ambiguous, and history education has engendered heated debates. It is in the context of Japan's "contested war memories" that the question of the display of *sensō-ga* needs to be understood. In other words, whether or not the National Museum displays *sensō-ga*, and the way in which the museum does display *sensō-ga* manifests, not only the museum's response to politically-charged propaganda art, but also its response as a state educational institution to Japan's controversial war memories.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, TOKYO

After the 153 war paintings were returned on "indefinite loan" from the United States in 1970, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, planned an exhibition that would display 50 *sensō-ga* in 1977.⁵⁴ Yet, sensing that the *sensō-ga* exhibition would be part of a larger political controversy (including expected anger from the formerly colonized Asian nations), the museum abruptly cancelled the exhibition.⁵⁵ From this point on, the idea of '*sensō-ga no issei koukai*'—the release of the entire *sensō-ga* collection at once—became taboo.⁵⁶

The cancellation of the *sensō-ga* exhibition provoked not only the question of how the museum should deal with the collection, but also the question of whether *sensō-ga* should even be housed in the National Museum. Art critic Hariu Ichirō was furious about the museum's decision and criticized the cancellation. Hariu contended that a privately funded war museum should be established to accommodate *sensō-ga*. His suggestion entailed two significant concepts: First, that *sensō-ga* should not be accepted into the Japanese art historical canon because they function as historical

⁵⁴ The American government did not establish any stipulation concerning the *sensō-ga* collection. The National Museum virtually has full freedom in its decision of displaying the war paintings. Ozaki Masaaki, the curator of the National Museum, e-mail message to author, April 2008.

⁵⁵ "Henkan no *sensō-ga*, totsuzen kōkai chūshi" (The Exhibition of Repatriated War Paintings, Suddenly Cancelled), *Asahi Newspaper*, March 8, 1977; "Sensō to bijutsu: *sensō-ga no shiteki dojō*" (War and Art: the Historical Ground of War Paintings), *Bijutsu techō*, September 1977, 45.

⁵⁶ In my phone interview with curator at the National Museum Suzuki Katsuo conducted in June 2006, Suzuki stated that it would be "inappropriate" (*tekisetsu dewa nai*) to display *sensō-ga* only by themselves.

documents rather than art, and second, that the *sensō-ga* collection should not remain under state control in post-war democratic Japan.⁵⁷ Although Hariu's proposal is hypothetical, his argument is nevertheless important; we must question whether we can critically reflect on Japan's past as long as *sensō-ga* is housed in an art museum that belongs to the government. Therefore, it is not simply the question of *whether or not* the National Museum displays *sensō-ga*, but, I would argue, it is the ideological *framing* of exhibiting such works that is at the core of this issue.

In response to the backlash exemplified by Hariu Ichirō, the museum reached a compromise on the issue. Shortly after the cancelled exhibition, the museum decided to display a few *sensō-ga* in the permanent exhibition as a semi-permanent display, making frequent changes to the selection of paintings. While this small selection of paintings made *sensō-ga* more accessible to the public, it pointed to the museum's inability, refusal, and reluctance to show the entire collection. The semi-permanent display, an inconspicuous release of only a few *sensō-ga*, was the museum's solution to both domestic criticism and international communities' potential concerns about the heritage of the former militarist government. As a result, *sensō-ga* is now displayed in the section "Art during and after the War" on the third floor of the National Museum in the same way as other paintings are displayed in the gallery. A few unframed *sensō-ga*, like the other artworks in the section, are hung on white walls in a masterpiece manner. They are integrated into the chronological narrative of Japanese modern art history, sharing exhibition space with other Japanese modern, avant-garde artworks of the early twentieth-century. At the same time, by placing unusually long textual information in the *sensō-ga* display area, as well as in its pamphlet and on its website, the museum acknowledges the problematic nature of the collection. However, the statement that the museum makes about the history of *sensō-ga* is rather ambiguous. The English version of the text panel reads as follows:

Soon after the 1929 Great Depression resulted in economic protectionism in many countries, the second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, leading to the enforcement of the National Mobilization Law next year. It was a difficult situation for "modern"

⁵⁷ Hariu Ichirō, "Warerano uchinaru sensō-ga" (Our Inner War Paintings), *Bijutsu techō*, September 1977, 46-58.

artists who were thought to ground their activities on individuality. In addition to usual military painters, leading artists began producing war record paintings by commission from the military press section. On the other hand, younger painters such as Ai-Mitsu, Matsumoto Shunsuke, and Asō Saburō created realist works aiming at leaving evidence of humanity at a narrow margin of wartime statism—rare legacies handed down to postwar art. This section centers on realist paintings of the 1940s and 1950s, including those artists who began their careers after the war.⁵⁸

While the text panel was likely posted to preclude potential criticism against celebration of militarism, it does not address why *sensō-ga* is controversial nor does it acknowledge that *sensō-ga* is so controversial that the museum is unable to show the entire collection. Rather than examining the propagandistic aspects of *sensō-ga*, which would differentiate the war paintings from other artworks of the same period, the museum instead focuses on the issues of modernist individuality and wartime collectivity. Moreover, the statement about the artists' "difficult situation" obscures the existence of volunteer war artists and symbiotic relationships between artists and the military.⁵⁹

The way in which the text panel addresses the war is also telling. The museum avoids using terms like 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' by choosing instead forms like "wartime statism," even though artists were often dispatched to Japan's colonies and were referred to as 'Imperial artists.' While *sensō-ga* is now released to the public, the museum's inability to refer to Japan's wartime role as victimizers is expressed in the form of the *omission* of its colonial aggression. Although the National Museum does not state that the war was a defensive one, it traces the cause of the war to the Great Depression, as if Japan did not have any choice but to participate in the events that followed. The question we have now to face is whether we should, as Hariu would, pessimistically bemoan the fact that *sensō-ga* are still under state control and are accepted into the art historical canon without sufficient historical contextualization to acknowledge Japan's war responsibility, or whether we might optimistically

⁵⁸ "Modern Japanese Art from the Museum Collection," The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, <<http://www.momat.go.jp/english/artmuseum/3.html>> (Accessed on May 25 2007).

⁵⁹ Kaneko, 135-137.

consider the display of a few *sensō-ga* as the first step in opening up a space for propaganda paintings in art historical discourse.

ART AND NATIONAL TRAUMA

As Benedict Anderson has indicated, forgetting and remembering certain historical events is an important agenda for imagining political community and constructing a national identity. Analogizing the history of a nation to the biography of a person, Anderson states that, upon formation of one's personal identity, the early part of one's life that "cannot be 'remembered' *must be narrated*" (emphasis added).⁶⁰ Likewise, a nation narrates stories of its glorious past with selective remembrance and purposeful amnesia, constructing its national identity. Importantly, museums have historically been a site of this national story-telling, functioning as what Louis Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses"—institutions through which a ruling class tries to maintain control by propagating its ideals without employing violence.⁶¹ The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo locates itself within this museological paradigm: it highlights the idealized self-image of the nation by omitting rather inconvenient historical facts from the representation of the Second World War in its display of *sensō-ga*.

Drawing on psychoanalytic theories, Gabriele Schwab, a German descendant, claims that there is a need for victims as well as victimizers to confront their trauma. She writes,

We need trauma discourses that look at the dynamic between victims and perpetrators and see that both of them are suffering from the psychic deformations of violent histories, albeit in different ways and with different responsibilities. Pervasive in violent histories is the transgenerational transmission of trauma, or as Abraham and Torok put it, a history of ghostly haunting by the phantoms of a silenced past.⁶²

⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 204.

⁶¹ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), 127-186; Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁶² Gabriele Schwab, "Haunting Legacies: Trauma in Children of Perpetrators," *Postcolonial Studies* 7, No. 2 (July 2004): 181.

This transmission of trauma is the case in Japan. Wartime aggression is Japan's phantom: a national secret of traumatic violence, shame, and guilt that haunt people until it is revisited, worked through, and finally mourned. What is necessary for Japan is the psychosocial mourning that heals the trauma of the victimizers, because otherwise, as Schwab claims, "they [violent histories] are bound to be re-enacted."⁶³

Art can be the focus of debates over the collective trauma of a nation. The political history of *how* particular works of art have been addressed, and specifically *by whom* they have been addressed can generate critical discussions or controversies that lead the public to both reconsider existing social orders and to acknowledge its nation's history. For example, calls for the restitution of art looted by Nazis instigated national-level disputes over Austria's role in the Second World War and its complicity with the Nazis.⁶⁴ The potential of art as a means to generate discussion is also suggested by art critic Sawaragi Noi, who characterizes the *sensō-ga* collection as a "Pandora's box" and demands the public display of all 153 paintings.⁶⁵ Just like Hariu, Sawaragi believes that *sensō-ga* could be instrumental in opening up Japan's psychological crypt in order to break the silence and so initiate a process of working through Japan's traumatic war history. As we have seen in the case of a few war paintings released by the National Museum, however, displaying *sensō-ga* does not necessarily lead to this end; displays of *sensō-ga* need to be carefully framed so that viewers will not be attracted by its ideology, or inclined to continue narrating the idealized past in a way to reinforce the identity of the "imagined political community." What would be this framework? Exhibiting *sensō-ga* with war art of China and Korea can be provocative, if not easy to organize. Provocative exhibitions may be possible if they are held outside state museums.

'New Museology' discourses that "question traditional museum approaches to issues of value, meaning, control, interpretation, authority and authenticity" provide a good model of what museums

⁶³ Ibid, 189.

⁶⁴ Michael J. Bazylar, *Holocaust Justice: The Battle for Restitution in America's Courts* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 240-249.

⁶⁵ Sawaragi Noi, *Bakushinchi no geijutsu / The Art of Ground Zero 1999-2001* (Tokyo: Shōbun Sha, 2002), 389.

can do.⁶⁶ As Tony Bennett argues, museums have the potential to contribute to or become a catalyst for (psycho-) social change, no matter how slowly these changes may occur. Defining museums as "people movers" or "differencing machines," he writes about the role of museums as follows:

Museums are best understood as distinctive cultural machineries that, through the tensions that they generate within the self, have operated as a means for balancing the tensions of modernity. They generate and regulate both how, and how far, we are detached from the past and pointed toward the future...museums have proven themselves to be highly productive machineries in their capacity to transform modes of thought, perception, and behavior—in short, ways of life.⁶⁷

In fact, a few Japanese museums have expressed interest in posing sensitive questions about Japan's wartime past through exhibiting war art. The Iwaki City Museum's exhibition *Imprints and Requiem of War* in 1988 introduced wartime and post-war 'war art' alongside Francisco Goya's prints, while the Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Art of Shōwa* in 2005 attempted to contextualize *sensō-ga* by displaying them with other forms of propaganda: sculptures and mass-produced posters.⁶⁸ The Kyoto University of Art and Design's exhibition *War and Art: Terror and Illusion of Beauty* in 2008 installed a few *sensō-ga* alongside contemporary war art, inviting Hariu Ichirō as a guest speaker to discuss Japan's wartime art that had been hidden from public spaces.⁶⁹ These exhibitions attest to the increasing willingness of

⁶⁶ Andrea Witcomb, "Interactivity in Museums: The Politics of Narrative Style," *Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London: Routledge, 2003), 54.

⁶⁷ Tony Bennett, "Exhibition, Difference, and the Logic of Culture," *Museum Frictions*, ed. Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szewaja, and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 56-7.

⁶⁸ *Sensō no kokuin to chōkoku* (Imprints and Requiem of War) (Fukushima: Iwaki City Museum, 1988); *Shōwa no a-to* (Art of Shōwa), (Niigata: Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, 2005).

⁶⁹ These three exhibitions were among very few exhibitions of this kind as far as I have researched.

Sensō to geijutsu wo meguru tenrankai siri-zu dainidan/ War and Art: Terror and Simulacrum of Beauty II, (Gallery Aube: Kyoto University of Art and Design, 2008). The exhibition information is available in Japanese at <<http://aube.kyoto-art.ac.jp/arc/080116/index.html>> (accessed on April 2, 2008).

Japanese museums to consider exhibition spaces as sites for the articulation of complex moral questions.

Whether or not an exhibition can become what Reesa Greenberg calls a "discursive event" furthermore depends on *how*, or *if*, the public would respond to the museological event.⁷⁰ We must then also consider *under what circumstances* the Japanese public would agree with museums' initiatives to unlock Japan's psychological crypt. Claiming that a "politics of regret," or "confronting toxic legacies of the past," can be new principles of legitimation, Jeffrey Olick suggests that hope for reconciliation between victims, who aspire for revenge, and victimizers, who seek to bury their wrong-doing, lies in their children; he writes, "the relevant collectivity, the only one that can be healed and can learn the lesson of history and make something of them, is the next generation."⁷¹ More specifically, in her study of the Holocaust, Hannah Holtschneider identifies the importance of the third generation for both victims and victimizers in revisiting trauma:

Because they [the third generation] are distant enough from the trauma itself, but still affected by its repercussions, they can replace static discursive patterns with a more immediate and honest human bonding. They can formulate a new set of questions while still being rooted in history.⁷²

Holtschneider argues that the third generation can break the silence of the first and second generations and thus address challenging questions about traumatic events, but the third generation is the final generation that is able to do so, because otherwise the history would be too remote. If the *sensō-ga* collection is, indeed, Japan's "Pandora's box," and if an exhibition can be a catalyst for social change, it is not impossible for an exhibition of *sensō-ga* framed by the third generation, my generation, to generate critical discussion about Japan's traumatic experience as the victimizer. Until then,

⁷⁰ Reesa Greenberg, "The Exhibition as Discursive Event," *Longing and Belonging From the Faraway Nearby* (Santa Fe: Site Santa Fe, 1995), 118.

⁷¹ Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 148.

⁷² Krondorfer. Quoted in Hannah Holtschneider, *German Protestants Remembers the Holocaust: Theology and the Construction of Collective Memory* (LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster, 2001), 148.

Japan ultimately remains unable to "reset the game" and enter into a 'post' post-war period.

NOTE

This essay was originally part of my MA thesis, "Japan's Haunting War Art: Propaganda Paintings, War Responsibility, and Museums" (Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 2008). For the rest of the thesis, see Asato Ikeda, "Fujita Tsuguharu Retrospective 2006: Resurrection of a Former Official War Painter," *Josai University Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 21 (forthcoming in December, 2009). My work is highly indebted to my thesis supervisors, Ming Tiampo and Reesa Greenberg. I am also grateful for inspiration, comments, and criticisms from Laura Brandon, Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, and Barbara Gabriel. I would like to thank Sara Kowalski and N.J. Hall for editorial help. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations are by the author.

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BRONWYN WOOD

EDUCATING FOR PEACE THROUGH WAR:

Reflections on Ten Days in a War Zone, Lebanon 2006¹

This paper presents an autobiographical perspective of war, drawing from the author's experience of ten days in southern Lebanon during the Israel-Lebanon conflict of 2006. Diary entries, art, photos and stories are introduced to provide a visual and textual snapshot. Drawing on these experiences, the author reflects on how the teaching of a sanitised version of war in social science classrooms often fails to explore the complexities and contradictions of war. She uses Freire's notion of praxis – the weaving together of critical consciousness and critical intervention – as a possibility for social scientists and educators in the global effort to reduce conflict and promote peace.

INTRODUCTION

"If children are loved and valued, why are they still being used as cannon-fodder? We believe that love and respect for children are key to humanitarian and political progress....Avoiding future conflicts will require not just caring for the youngest victims of war, but also educating them for peace" (UNICEF 1996, 1).

The purpose of this paper is to provide some reflections upon war, drawing from my short-lived 'insider perspective' in Southern Lebanon in July, 2006. My reflections draw from my background as a social sciences high school teacher in New Zealand, a mother to my two small boys, and wife to my United Nations Military Observer (UNMO) husband. Through the introductions of three vignettes providing visual and textual insight into the experience, I intend to draw some reflections for educators and social scientists, in particular, on how the teaching of a sanitised version of war in social science classrooms often fails to explore the complexity and contradictions of war. In this paper, I pay heed to Denzin and Giardina's (2007) call to start with the personal and the biographical and our own location in the world around us as our point of reference when addressing the need for social change. I endeavour to

¹ Dedicated to the memory of Major Hans-Peter Lang, Austria – friend and neighbour in Tyre, Lebanon (1962-2006).